

# Business sustainability – what is it really

Business sustainability has been defined as managing the triple bottom line. This is a process by which businesses manage their financial, social and environmental risks, obligations and opportunities. They are sometimes referred to as profits, people and planet.

However, this approach relies on an accounting based perspective and does not fully capture the time element that is inherent within business sustainability. A more robust definition is that business sustainability represents resilience over time. Businesses that can survive shocks because they are intimately connected to healthy economic, social and environmental systems. These businesses create economic value and contribute to healthy ecosystems and strong communities.

Business sustainability requires firms to adhere to the principles of sustainable development. According to the World Council for Economic Development (WCED), sustainable development is development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." So, for industrial development to be sustainable, it must address important issues at the macro level, such as: economic efficiency (innovation, prosperity, productivity), social equity (poverty community, health and wellness, human rights) and environmental accountability (climate change, land use biodiversity).

There are a number of best practices that foster business sustainability, and help organisations move along the path from laggards to leaders. These practices include:

- Stakeholder engagement: Organisations can learn from customers, employees and their surrounding community. Engagement is not only about pushing out messages, but understanding opposition, finding common ground and involving stakeholders in joint decision-making;
- Environmental management systems: These systems provide the structures and processes that help embed environmental efficiency into a firm's culture and mitigate risks. The most widely recognised standard worldwide is ISO 14001, but numerous other industry-specific and country-specific standards exist;

- Reporting and disclosure: Measurement and control are at the heart of instituting sustainable practices. Not only can organisations collect and collate the information, they can also be entirely transparent with outsiders. The Global Reporting Initiative is one of many examples of well-recognised reporting standards;
- Life cycle analysis: Those organisations wanting to take a large leap forward should systematically analyse the environment and social impact of the products they use and produce through the life cycle analysis, which measure more accurately impacts.

Firms that are sustainable have been shown to attract and retain employees more easily and experience less financial and reputation risk. These firms are also more innovative and adaptive to their environments.

Example:

- Technical or financial firms going to a paperless office environment;
- A mobile phone manufacturer pursuing a 'conflict-free' mineral resource supply chain;
- A bank committing to and accomplishing carbon-free operations.

*This article was taken from the Financial Times Lexicon*

## Motivating employees to reduce waste in the workplace

Waste reduction in the workplace hinges on the participation and support of employees, managers, and customers. It involves rethinking the way we do things and changing old habits.

This is not easy, but rewards abound as resources and money are saved. The following outlines a few key concepts to help improve environmental and operational performance of waste reduction programs in the workplace.

Changing old habits and forming new ones is an on-going process that begins with exposure to, and assimilation of pertinent information. An individual uses information to understand the relative costs and benefits of adopting a new behaviour. If a new practice isn't reinforced by an on-going perception that benefits outweigh costs, any change will likely be temporary. It takes time, patience, and persistence.

### Create a "Green Team"

A green team is an inter-department group that coordinates and implements practices to reduce waste and increase the efficiency of an organization's internal operations. As employees are the experts on how operations work their involvement is critical to the success of any program.

### Person-to-Person Communication

Seek volunteers in each work unit who are willing to serve as "waste reduction coordinators." These coordinators provide a friendly and knowledgeable source of information throughout the organization. Train employees. Let them know they are expected to use resources carefully and participate in waste reduction programs. Explain how to prevent waste and recycle materials. Promote waste reduction in employee gatherings. Show what is being done well and what areas need improvement.

### Set a Good Example

To help institutionalise new practices be sure to practice what you preach.



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## Tips for saving energy in your business

Whenever you save energy within your business you are also saving money. Electricity costs contribute to your business's financial bottom line so the more energy you save in your business the more profitable you can be.

Some energy saving actions, such as using more energy-efficient appliances, may involve an initial investment. However, this investment can often result in significant energy savings that will reduce your energy costs. Energy rating labels can help you



to choose energy-efficient appliances, which can also save you money.

It is important that you take a close look at your energy costs and start to discover what areas of your business are using the most energy. Typically, equipment that involves heating and cooling will use the most energy.

Your business may benefit from an energy efficiency assessment. An assessment measures your current energy use and greenhouse gas emissions to provide priority recommendations for energy efficiency action.

Understanding your energy use and taking steps to become more energy efficient can benefit your business in a range of ways. Saving energy will help your business cut carbon emissions, reduce costs and enhance your image.

Energy efficiency and conservation should be a part of your business planning. There are many low-cost steps that businesses can take to start saving energy now, as well as more detailed actions that can happen over time.



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Why not contact Eris McCarthy for an obligation-free analysis of your energy costs and suitability of solar to provide relief from those rising electricity bills.

At Eris McCarthy, we take pride in delivering long term savings in energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions through quality monitored solar solutions.



# Ellton Group Move into Energy Space

In a strategic move to expand its business offering, the Gosford based Ellton Group have launched Ellton Energy to service its client base with energy efficient products such as Auzimax energy monitoring systems and XDX and Energy Mist retrofitted equipment.

Ellton Energy National Sales Director, Matthew Wales, said that the company is actively working with customers solving their energy problems as operating and power costs soar.

"Our primary platform is the Auzimax energy monitoring system which is a total energy management tool that quantifies every facet of energy usage in our customer's buildings in real time", said Mr Wales.

"The technology can be installed in less than a day and gives our customers a Cloud based live feed on all energy consuming equipment whether they are in an office or industrial building".

"The system allows customers to manage peak demand, monitor multiple sites, alarm equipment when excess energy usage occurs and allows management to see remotely what any component in any building is using in kWh at any time day or night", he said.

Ellton Energy believe understanding your energy usage is key to reducing energy costs and planning future upgrades and new maintenance regimes.

"By monitoring usage, Ellton Energy can assist customers with equipment upgrades especially with air-conditioning and refrigeration systems which are generally the main power drain".

"Using XDX and Energy Mist technology, we can then offer retrofitted solutions to existing heating and cooling equipment that can save substantially on energy bills, prolong equipment life and push out CAPEX programs".

With the high cost of maintaining and replacing air-conditioning and refrigeration systems, Ellton Energy have been working with customers on ways to improve equipment effi-

ciency, upgrading key pieces of hardware and introducing more efficient management practices to save on energy costs. Energy assessments include office buildings, shopping centres, fast food outlets, industrial complexes, hotels and pubs.

Ellton Energy (part of the Ellton Group) are a Gosford based company with a national network providing products and services for the energy, mining and materials handling industry.

They can be contacted on +61 2 4324 1900 or go to [save@elltonenergy.com.au](http://elltonenergy.com.au).

*"As you are aware my company was chosen and I gladly volunteered to trial XDX on behalf of The National Food Distributors Association (NAFDA).*

*My equipment was suitable for the trial for a couple of reasons. Firstly, our coolroom has its own metered quarterly energy bill and secondly it closely represents the size (150 pallets), age (2 years old) and type of equipment our members might own and operate in their businesses.*

*Since installing XDX we have seen between 15% and 30% reduction in the volume of electricity used (kWh) over the last six months. Before XDX I was not seeing the compressor cycle off as frequently, now I see it cycled off more often and clearly the room runs to temperature.*

*A noticeable difference is how quickly the coolroom returns to temperature and cycles off. Further to this we now have less defrost cycles whilst still holding temperature and no adverse effect on machinery.*

*Thank you for introducing us to this new technology and would recommend others in NAFDA install XDX. I will also look to install this technology when I update the equipment in our retail outlet."*

**Mark Horton, Director, Manly Freezers Pty Ltd.**

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